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action

SYLLABICATION: ac·tion

PRONUNCIATION:  ăk'shən

NOUN: 1. The state or process of acting or doing: *The medical team went into action.* 2. **Something done or accomplished;** a deed. See Usage Note at **act**. 3. Organized activity to accomplish an objective: *a problem requiring drastic action.* 4. The causation of change by the exertion of power or a natural process: *the action of waves on a beach; the action of a drug on blood pressure.* 5. A movement or a series of movements, as of an actor. 6. Manner of movement: *a horse with fine action.* 7. Habitual or vigorous activity; energy: *a woman of action.* 8. Behavior or conduct. Often used in the plural. 9a. The operating parts of a mechanism. b. The manner in which such parts operate. c. The manner in which a musical instrument can be played; playability: *a piano with quick action.* 10. A change that occurs in the body or in a bodily organ as a result of its functioning. 11. A physical change, as in position, mass, or energy, that an object or a system undergoes. 12. The series of events and episodes that form the plot of a story or play. 13. The appearance of animation of a figure in painting or sculpture. 14. *Law* A judicial proceeding whose purpose is to obtain relief at the hands of a court. 15a. Armed encounter; combat: *missing in action.* b. An engagement between troops or ships: *fought a rear-guard action.* 16. The most important or exciting work or activity in a specific field or area: *always heads for where the action is.*

OTHER FORMS: ac'tion-less —ADJECTIVE

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Action

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Main Entry: [action](#)
Pronunciation: \ˈak-shən\
Function: *noun*
Etymology: Middle English *accioun*, from Anglo-French *accion*, from Latin *action-*, *actio*, from *agere* to do — more at [AGENT](#)
Date: 14th century

1 : the initiating of a proceeding in a court of justice by which one demands or enforces one's right ; *also* : the proceeding itself
2 : the bringing about of an alteration by force or through a natural agency
3 : the manner or method of performing: **a** : an actor's or speaker's deportment or expression by means of attitude, voice, and gesture **b** : the style of movement of the feet and legs (as of a horse) **c** : a function of the body or one of its parts
4 : an act of will
5 a : **a thing done**: DEED **b** : the accomplishment of a thing usually over a period of time, in stages, or with the possibility of repetition **c** *plural* : BEHAVIOR , CONDUCT <unscrupulous *actions*> **d** : INITIATIVE , ENTERPRISE <a man of *action*>
6 a (1) : an engagement between troops or ships (2) : combat in war <gallantry in *action*> **b** (1) : an event or series of events forming a literary composition (2) : the unfolding of the events of a drama or work of fiction : PLOT (3) : the movement of incidents in a plot **c** : the combination of circumstances that constitute the subject matter of a painting or sculpture
7 a : an operating mechanism **b** : the manner in which a mechanism or instrument operates
8 a : the price movement and trading volume of a commodity, security, or market **b** : the process of betting including the offering and acceptance of a bet and determination of a winner **c** : financial gain or an opportunity for financial gain <a piece of the *action*>
9 : sexual activity
10 : the most vigorous, productive, or exciting activity in a particular field, area, or group <wants to be where the *action* is>

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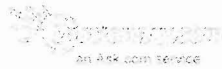
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ac·tion [ak-shuh-n] Show IPA Pronunciation ?

—noun

1. the process or state of acting or of being active: *The machine is not in action now.*
2. **something done or performed; act; deed.**
3. characterized by physical or mental activity: *a crisis that demands action instead of debate; hoping for constructive action by the landlord.*
4. actions, habitual or usual acts; conduct: *He is responsible for his actions.*
5. energetic activity: *a man of action.*
6. an exertion of power or force: *the action of wind upon a ship's sails.*
7. effect or influence: *the action of morphine.*
8. *Physiology.* a change in organs, tissues, or cells leading to performance of a function, as in muscular contraction.
9. way or manner of moving: *the action of a machine or of a horse.*
10. the mechanism by which something is operated, as that of a gun or a piano.
11. a military encounter or engagement; battle, skirmish, or the like.
12. combat: *He saw action in Vietnam.*
13. *Literature.* the main subject or story, as distinguished from an incidental episode.
14. *Theater.*
 - a. dramatic plot: *the action of a scene.*
 - b. one of the three unities. Compare **UNITY** (def. 8).
15. the gestures or deportment of an actor or speaker.
16. *Fine Arts.* the appearance of animation, movement, or emotion given to figures by their attitude, position, or expression.
17. *Law.*
 - a. a proceeding instituted by one party against another.
 - b. the right of bringing it.
18. *Slang.*
 - a. *He gave us some tips on where the action was.*
 - b. gambling or the excitement of gambling: *The casino usually offers plenty of action.*
 - c. money bet in gambling, esp. illegally.
19. *Ecclesiastical.*
 - a. a religious ceremony, esp. a Eucharistic service.
 - b. the canon of the Mass.
 - c. those parts of a service of worship in which the congregation participates.

—adjective

20. characterized by brisk or dynamic action: *an action car; an action melodrama.*

—Idioms

21. **in action,**

